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INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

ANDREW G. PIERCE,

MAYOR,

TO THE

CITY COUNCIL OF NEW BEDFORD,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TWO BRANCHES IN CONVENTION,

January 6, 1868.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

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A D D R E S S.

Gentlemen of the City Council:

We have been called by the decisive voice of our fellow citizens to the charge of the municipal affairs of our city. To us have been committed its interests for the ensuing year. Had I consulted my own feelings, some other person than myself would have occupied my present position; and I must confess to some want of confidence in my ability to discharge the duties of a place which has been well filled by so many able predecessors.

In assuming, gentlemen, the duties and responsibilities devolved upon us by the confidence of the people, let us trust for guidance in Him who rules supreme over men and governments, and having taken the required oath, approach our duties, sensible of its solemn obligations, with the full purpose to discharge them according to our ability and as we deem for the best interests of all our citizens.

The year just closed has been one of moderate prosperity in our community, and the responsibil-

ity, so far as the advancing of its several interests depends upon the management of the affairs of the city, is upon us for the ensuing year. It will be our duty so to conduct those affairs, as not only to foster our present home industries, but to encourage the investment of capital in new enterprises.

We are commencing a year which, judging from the present unsatisfactory condition of business, forebodes a depression in the active interests of the country, which will have its influence on our community, and will call upon us for an unusual exercise of prudence and economy in all our appropriations and expenditures, so that the burden of taxation, always heavy, may this year weigh as lightly as possible upon all. I would not be understood as advising a niggardly economy which would debar the moderate expenditure of to-day to save a large outlay in the future; but what I do recommend is, that *all* improvements, however much to be desired, but not absolutely imperative, requiring the creation of a permanent city debt to be contracted in the present state of our currency, should be postponed until a paper dollar shall approximate more nearly the value of a coin dollar.

As is customary on similar occasions, I shall briefly allude to some of the subjects which will demand your attention the present year, reserving to myself the privilege of further recommendations when I shall have become more familiar with the

duties pertaining to the executive officer of the city.

FINANCIAL.

The Collection of Taxes.

It is gratifying to know that there has been the past year the same promptness on the part of the inhabitants of our city in the payment of taxes as for several years previous. The statement of the Collector of Taxes is:

The assessment of 1867 was	\$328,421.25
Of this sum there has been collected	319,892.75
Leaving uncollected	\$8,528.50

Two and two-thirds per cent. only of the tax bills, the smallest balance of uncollected taxes for one year reported for many years.

The Collector's statement of his receipts is as follows:

Paid State Treasurer,	\$98,850.00
Paid County Treasurer,	20,434.95
Paid City Treasurer,	184,160.46
Discount for prompt pay,	15,727.05
Remittances by Assessors,	720.29
	<hr/>
	\$319,892.75

From this statement it is seen, that of the sum of about *three hundred and three thousand dollars* received by the Collector, nearly *one hundred and*

twenty thousand dollars have been paid into the State and County treasuries.

Unusual success has attended the unceasing efforts to collect the unpaid taxes of previous years. Of the sum of \$9,848.28 at this time last year remaining unpaid of the tax of 1866, there has been paid \$7,306.52. Of the outstanding amounts of previous years there have been collected \$1,264.12.

It is a noticeable and encouraging fact that in both the years 1866 and 1867, *the whole amount of taxes collected has exceeded the amount assessed for these years respectively.*

Appropriations.

The appropriations for the year 1867-8 will, it is believed, fully meet the demands of the several departments. Although it is possible that in some of the items there may be a small deficiency, it is believed that in the aggregate all the necessary outlays can be met without any additional credits.

Special Appropriations.

During the past year the City Council have made special appropriations as follows:

Campbell street sewer,	\$1,500
Rural Cemetery,	6,500
Oak Grove Cemetery,	3,000
	<hr/>
	\$11,000

There was in the year 1866 a deficiency in the Water Works appropriations of five thousand dollars, which it would be well to include in the arrangement which must shortly be made for an additional appropriation for this undertaking. Towards the liquidation of this amount of eleven thousand dollars the Treasurer makes it to appear that the sum of \$6,680.33 is available, and that you will be called upon to include the sum of \$4,313.67 in the general appropriation order.

City Debt.

Independent of the water debt, the bonds of the city now outstanding amount to \$329,000; nineteen thousand and fifty dollars having been paid during the year. Our war debt, about \$170,000, is included in this. This part of the public debt bears an interest of 5 1-4 per centum per annum. The amount is \$113,200 less than when at its maximum. The last of these bonds mature Oct. 1st, 1884.

There has been another issue of water bonds the past year of one hundred thousand dollars; making the whole amount issued for the purposes of the Water Works, \$200,000, bearing interest at six per cent.

The first falls due Oct. 1st, 1885, and the last Oct. 1st, 1894, \$20,000 being payable every year.

No part of this debt is payable until the ordinary city debt shall be paid in full.

It will be seen that the whole amount of the city's indebtedness is \$529,000, represented by coupon bonds, with an average interest of 5 47-100 per cent.

The city has no temporary debt. As further loans will be required the present year for the Water Works, I would recommend that, in arranging the time for the maturity of the bonds, the same course should be pursued in fixing the amount to mature in any one year.

It gives confidence to the holders of our obligations to know that they will be met at maturity, and they will be met without renewal, if the annual payments are fixed at an amount that can be without inconvenience included in our annual appropriations.

State Aid Advances.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts stands charged upon our books, with advances made under the State Aid laws, \$10,646.05. Of this sum, \$9,496.31 is for payments made for the year 1867, and the balance, \$1,149.74, is the aggregate of unsettled balances of former years, nearly the whole amount of which will finally be paid to us.

No town or city of the Commonwealth can, in the matter of the State aid advances, exhibit a

more desirable record than New Bedford. The operation has extended over a period of seven years; monthly payments have been made, to or for, about two thousand beneficiaries; \$155,000 have been disbursed; and yet, while the sum which will ultimately remain unpaid will be but an insignificant percentage upon the whole, no appeal has ever been, in a single case, made from the decision of our authorities to the Board of Appeal in Boston.

To be found thus faithful to the city, the State, and the State's beneficiaries, exhibits a degree of careful and enlightened management, creditable to our municipality, and to those who by the direction of the city government have been charged with this important duty. It should be borne in mind that this operation has not been without cost to our city.

The loss of interest arising out of the delay on the part of the Commonwealth to reimburse our advances, the extra labor which at times has been called for, and the inevitable balances of each year's operations remaining unpaid, make a large aggregate, and will, it is thought, amount to nearly \$10,000. This large sum must be included in any estimate which may be made of New Bedford's contributions to the preservation and sustaining of our national government.

THE INTRODUCTION OF WATER

Into the city is the most important work in which our Municipal Corporation has been engaged. The large outlay attending it, and the great advantages hoped to be derived from it, necessarily make it a subject of general interest in our community. The expediency and wisdom of this enterprise it is now too late to consider. The city is fully committed to the work, not only by the sanction of the popular vote of the citizens and of successive city councils, but by the expenditure of large sums of money. From the commencement, I have ever been an earnest advocate of the introduction of water, and believe that when it shall have been distributed and the citizens have had an opportunity to experience its benefits at their homes and in the various business undertakings requiring its use, its bitterest opponents will be the least willing to return to their old mode of supply.

The rapid filling up of the storing reservoir, after the gates at the same were closed, attests the wisdom of those who selected the source of supply, and fully corroborates their statement that this supply of water would be abundantly ample for the present and future wants of the city.

The report of the Commissioners shows an actual cash disbursement, up to the present date, of \$127,387.44.

Contracts are already made which will call for an expenditure of \$284,814.83; and in addition, there will be required for engine house, duplicate engine, land damages and incidentals, the estimated sum of \$76,000.

The original estimate made by the Engineers and the Board of Water Commissioners placed the total probable cost of the work, with ten miles of distribution, at \$500,000. Although the increased price of labor and materials has added somewhat to the cost of certain portions of the work, yet those in charge of the same are sanguine that the total expenditure will not exceed the amount originally contemplated.

I am satisfied that the execution of the work is in faithful and able hands; that the commissioners have diligently labored to secure thoroughness and durability, with prudence and economy in the expenditure of money, and that they have striven for the expeditious completion of the work. As in all such large undertakings, there has been more delay in forwarding the work than some ardent persons have desired; but from my own personal observation, I believe the delay has not proved detrimental to the city; since the work has been prosecuted with increased faithfulness and at a smaller cost. It is hoped that the present year may witness the introduction of water, for besides the impatience of many of our citizens to avail themselves of the use

of it, the safety of the city in event of a conflagration is dependent upon an increased supply. Were there no other reasons, this necessity for water in the extinguishment of fires should urge forward this work with all prudent rapidity. It will be for you to provide the means for the further prosecution of the work, agreeable to the ordinances of the city.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

This subject is one that should secure your faithful consideration, and I call it to your attention with much interest, realizing its great importance. The maintenance of our public schools absorbs a large portion of the annual appropriations; which fact, of itself, demands that they should receive your watchful regard. We cannot overrate their importance, and I bespeak for them your fostering care. So far as my knowledge extends, they have been well regulated and managed, and we have the testimony of both the committee and the superintendent that they are, as a whole, in an unusually prosperous and promising condition. As the financial year has not yet closed and the accounts of the school department have not yet been made up, I am not able to lay before you the amount of its expenditures for the past year. But there have been no unusual outgoes, and the expenses of the department are not likely

to overrun the estimates submitted by the school committee at the beginning of the year. It is highly important that there should be unanimity of action between the city council and the school committee; between those who furnish the funds for the support of the schools and those whose duty it is to distribute and apply them: for these reasons I would suggest whether the interests of this department would not be promoted, if our charter provided that either the Mayor or the President of the Common Council, or both, should be members, *ex-officio*, of the school committee.

In this connection, I desire to speak on one important point that is likely to be brought forward in the course of your deliberations, with the candor and frankness that it demands. There have been very earnest appeals made by the school committee to several successive city governments, for enlarged and more convenient school accommodations. I do not hesitate to express my belief, founded on personal examination in the premises, that those appeals have been well grounded.

The question seems to my mind to turn upon this point; whether the present time, in view of the general interests of the city, and the highest advantage of the schools themselves, is the best time to respond to that appeal. I have no desire to prejudge the question, or to prejudice any mind against action; but I wish to give candid expres-

sion to thoughts that have had weight in my mind, and that may have influence with some of you. Of course, if the necessities of the schools will not admit of further delay, no question of economy can consistently be urged. But in my judgment, as I have previously intimated, the present year will be a doubtful one, so far as the financial prosperity of the community generally is concerned, and any increase of taxation for extraordinary objects will be severely felt; while by delaying the project a reasonable time, the materials that make up the cost of a building will be obtained for a large percentage less than at present, and thus enable the city at the proper time to erect a far more creditable and useful building than would now be thought practicable and wise. But whatever may be your action, I know you will evince no lack of interest in such vital aids of individual culture and the common weal, as the Public Schools.

STREETS AND HIGHWAYS.

This department (after that for schools) calls for the largest appropriations. In a city like ours, scattered over a large territory, the annual repairs of streets must be considerable.

I find these, as also the roads leading from the city, generally in good order. It will be our duty to keep them fully up to their present condition.

By the recommendation of my worthy predecessor during the past year a stone-crushing machine was procured to prepare stone for macadamizing the streets, which enables the Superintendent at a moderate expense to repair them in a more durable manner than heretofore.

There have been macadamized during the past year ten sections of streets, and I am informed others would have been repaired in this manner but for the anticipated opening of the streets for the water pipes, which it is expected will be put in the present year. During the past year, as an experiment, a small portion of the sidewalks requiring to be flagged have been laid in concrete at a cost of about one-fifth of flagging. This mode having been tried in other cities with much success, I would recommend it to your careful attention. The opening of the streets for the putting in of gas pipes is now done by the employees of the Gas Company, and occasions much trouble and expense to the city. I would recommend that, if possible, an arrangement be made with the Gas Company for the work to be done by men employed by the Superintendent of Streets, and the Gas Company reimburse the city for the actual cost.

STREET LAMPS.

This department is reported to me generally in good order. The number of gas lights is 250.

Number of oil lamps 212. Under the management of the efficient committee for the past two years, the expenses of this department have been considerably reduced, by the substitution in the oil lamps of a cheap burning oil in the place of the high cost oils formerly used. Our streets are now lighted but a portion of the month, and at no time later than 11 o'clock. I would suggest for your consideration as a police measure, that a portion of the lights be left burning to a later hour, and that in determining when to light the lamps more attention be given to the darkness of the night than to the almanac.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

This department I find is very efficient, and quite equal to meet any emergency. There are, in active service at the present time, four steam fire-engines, one hand engine and one hook and ladder carriage, employing a force of 126 men, and 12 horses. During the year, our city has not suffered by any very serious conflagration, although we have had some threatening outbreaks, which under the old system of hand engines might have proved very disastrous. The want of a sufficient supply of water for the extinguishment of fires in several sections of the city is serious, and should demand your attention; and I would recommend an early conference of the committee of this department

with the Water Commissioners, that the water pipes to be put into the streets may be so laid that the department can at all times obtain a supply of water in the various sections of the city, and thus promote its efficiency. On a like occasion last year, the subject of a fire alarm telegraph was brought to the attention of the City Council by my predecessor. The Board of Engineers are very urgent for its adoption, and I would recommend the subject to your careful consideration.

The horses belonging to this department have so little labor to perform, I would suggest for the consideration of the appropriate committee, whether a portion of them, say those attached to one engine and its hose carriage, cannot daily be employed upon the streets of the city with much benefit to the animals, without detriment to the efficiency of this department and with some considerable economy to the city.

CEMETERIES.

Rural Cemetery was enlarged some two years since, by the purchase of seventy acres. These were surveyed, a plot made and a portion of the ground laid out. When they shall have been improved, agreeably to the plans proposed, this cemetery will compare favorably with those in other cities, and meet a want so much desired by many of our citizens. The past season the work has been vig-

orously prosecuted. Seventeen acres have been cleared; about eight acres are graded and nearly ready for sale. The expenditure thus far has been \$29,523.41.

Oak Grove Cemetery was enlarged at the same time by the addition of fourteen acres. During the past season about eight acres have been prepared for sale. The expenditure thus far has been \$17,202.86.

The system has been adopted of employing during the winter able-bodied men who apply to the Overseers of the Poor for help, thereby enabling the persons requiring aid to be independent and supply their wants by the work of their own hands.

It will be for you to furnish the means to complete the work projected, if you deem it advisable, looking to the sale of lots to reimburse the city.

I would recommend that the eight acres, in either cemetery, nearly finished, be completed, and that further improvements be suspended for the present.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

It seems almost unnecessary to call your attention to the subject of the public health. I wish however to remind you that freedom from those diseases which find in impure accumulations their origin and support *cannot* be secured, without the most constant and energetic action on the part of the city government. New Bedford is not exempt from

the presence of a class of persons who will not exercise that care in relation to the condition of their houses and inclosures which is demanded by a due regard to their own safety or the safety of the community. This disregard is too common and too dangerous to allow the important subject of the health of the community to rest upon individual responsibility or thoughtfulness. It is our duty to see that the legislative and municipal enactments in relation to the public health are enforced. The laws of the Commonwealth and the ordinances of the city contain all needful provisions on this important subject, and it is your duty to insure their vigorous and impartial administration. I know of no more efficient method of doing this, than that which was inaugurated by my predecessor. It has given much satisfaction to the people, and the success with which its operation has been attended, commends it to your continued support. I desire here to say, that the healthy condition of our city for the last two years, and its freedom from that class of nuisances which, while they include the elements of danger, are principally offensive because of their interference with the daily comfort and convenience of the people, have been mainly owing to the vigilant and discreet discharge of duty on the part of the officer who has been charged with the execution of the laws pertaining to this branch of the public service.

CITY CHARTER AND ORDINANCES.

In the emergency of the permanent disability of the Mayor to perform the duties of the office, or in case of his death, our city charter provides no means whereby the city council may be convened to supply the vacancy. This, with the suggestion previously made that the Mayor or the President of the Common Council shall be members, ex-officio, of the School Committee, I would recommend to your early attention, that, if deemed advisable, the proper steps may be taken to petition the legislature for such amendments to the city charter as may be thought requisite. The city ordinances have not been revised since the year 1859. Subsequent enactments can only be consulted from the records of the City Clerk in the order in which they were passed; and from my own personal experience, I can assure you, that to obtain casual knowledge of the laws of the city from the ordinances as they now are, is attended with much trouble and labor. It would facilitate and render the transaction of the business much more satisfactory to its officers if they were revised. I would commend this subject to your consideration.

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The efficient administration of the affairs of the Public Library by its managers, calls for but little

action on the part of the city council, beyond the annual appointment of the Trustees at large and providing the annual appropriations.

With the limited amount of funds which has been devoted to the purchase of books from the yearly appropriations, after the payment of the necessary expenses, aided by the donations, many of them of great value, there have been gathered more than twenty thousand volumes of books, in almost every branch of knowledge, with an intrinsic value rarely excelled in a collection of like extent. The new catalogue, now in the hands of the printer for publication, will give you a better knowledge of its contents and its value, and greatly increase its usefulness.

The annual report of the Trustees will be before you, from which you will learn all the necessary details in relation to its condition and management. The *first* Free Public Library to give forth its contents to the public, it has been one of the first in the vigor of its growth and the success of its administration; and while bearing testimony to an enlightened and faithful management of its affairs, by which this gratifying result has been attained, I should do injustice to my own feelings and to the invaluable services of the gentleman who has always been its librarian, did I not recognize his zeal and talents as among the most efficient agencies of its

usefulness and prosperity. I commend the institution to your regard and liberal action.

RECORDS OF THE REBELLION.

In accordance with a law of the Commonwealth, a record containing the names of all the soldiers and sailors, who enlisted in the quota of New Bedford, during the war of the rebellion, has been prepared by the City Clerk, assisted by some of the clerks in the office of the Adjutant General.

The war records of the City, State, and Nation, have been carefully examined in the compilation, and although perfect correctness never can be attained in such undertakings, it is believed that no work of the kind has been prepared by any town or city in our State that surpasses it in the extent or the accuracy of its information.

The history of New Bedford in the war, is far from being finished by the completion of this record. More than this is required, not only that justice may be done to our brave volunteers in the army and navy, but to the untiring, self-sacrificing patriotism of the men, women and children of our city, and their heart-felt, never-failing gratitude to those who fought our battles, gave victory to our standard, and peace to our country. A work having in view such an account of New Bedford in the "war,"

is now in the course of preparation by one of the officers of the city, whose position during the contest was such as to give him a favorable opportunity for the accumulation of the materials for such a compilation.

It was undertaken at the request of the Military Committee of the Council, and it is to be hoped that the work will receive from you such encouragement and support as will insure its early completion and publication. But allow me in this connection to remind you, that not alone in recorded memories, or by the monument that adorns and consecrates yonder inclosure, should you show your appreciation for services nobly performed, and sacrifices heroically endured. We have among us those who have borne the hardships of the camp, the dangers of the sea, and the privations of the prison-pen. They have returned to us with shattered health and bodies. Let us in the distribution of any offices that they can fill, give them a large share of our preference, and thereby feebly repay in part the debt of gratitude we owe.

GENTLEMEN:

I have thus briefly alluded to a portion of the topics that will claim your attention the present year. The details of the government will devolve upon you, acting through your several committees.

It will require some sacrifice of your time, but I trust the energy and ability that you will bring to this, will result to the honor and prosperity of our city; and, if so, this will be an ample reward for all your labor.



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Date Due

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Pierce, Andrew Granville,
1829-1903.
Inaugural address of Andrew
G. Pierce, mayor, to the
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